

Using social media to attract potential recruits

Social media is the social interaction of people through virtual communities. It's used to share information and communicate via text, photo, audio, and video. Social media has grown to such an extent that it is now seen to be an important part of everyday life and is a useful tool for employers to use as part of their recruitment strategies.

What are the popular social media channels?

Listed below are the main social media platforms which are freely available to help promote your vacancies.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that allows registered users, including businesses, to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

How you can use it

- Create a profile page for your organisation.
- Post regular updates, including vacancies and good news stories about current workers.
- Invite people you know and other organisations to like your page.
- Post vacancies in local groups. These could be local buy and sell groups, community groups, and job groups.
- If you're willing to invest, use Facebook advertising to target adverts to people in your local area. You can also target people by their age, gender and interests.

For more information go to www.facebook.com

YouTube

YouTube is one of a growing number of video hosting websites that allow members to store, watch and comment on video content.

How you can use it

- Create an account for your organisation.
- Upload interesting videos from your organisation. These could be case studies of people who work there, or footage from an open day or event.
- Include a description so people can easily search for your video.
- Always provide a link for where people can find more information.
- You can link to YouTube videos in your social media posts.

For more information go to www.youtube.com

Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging service that allows registered members to send out short posts called tweets. Each tweet can be a maximum of 140 characters long. Users can follow other users and interact and share each other's tweets.

How you can use it

- Create an account for your organisation.
- Follow individuals and other organisations you already know. It might be useful to follow your local Jobcentre Plus, council, school or college. Think of anyone who might help you promote your vacancies.
- Mention career advice organisations or your local Jobcentre Plus in your tweets and ask them to retweet to their followers. This means more people will see your post.
- If you're willing to invest, use Twitter advertising to target adverts to people in your local area. You can also target people by their age, gender, interests and the other organisations they follow. If you wanted to target school leavers, you might target 16-18 year olds who also follow popular careers advice organisations such as Prospects, Milkround and Not going to uni.

For more information go to www.twitter.com

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The site allows registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally. LinkedIn provides a great way of sharing business activity, advertising jobs and sharing industry news.

How you can use it

- Create an account for your organisation.
- Follow individuals and organisations you already know. It might be useful to follow your local Jobcentre Plus, council, school or college. Think of anyone who might help you promote your vacancies.
- You can sign up for an account with 'LinkedIn Recruiter'. This allows you to post jobs on LinkedIn and will advertise them to suitable candidates.
- If you're willing to invest, use LinkedIn advertising to promote your vacancies to a wider audience.

For more information go to www.linkedin.com

What are the benefits of using social media to promote vacancies?

Build awareness for your service.

Social media is a great way of telling people about your organisation, particularly those who haven't heard about you before. Posting in local community groups or jobs pages will help you do this. The more people that follow your account, the more people who see your vacancies.

Instant engagement with others.

Having an online presence means that you can respond to and share information instantly. This could be to share vacancies, news about forthcoming activities or share a good news story. It can also enhance your customer service as social media allows you to respond quickly to feedback.

It is often cheaper than traditional advertising and promotional activity.

Although there is an option to pay for targeted advertising packages, most basic social media accounts are free to businesses. The basic profile will provide a sufficient online presence to help your service get started and build its online presence.

Promote your website.

Using your social media accounts you will be able to signpost your followers to new and interesting content on your website by using hyperlinks in social media posts.

What are the risks of using social media?

Something gets posted you don't want others to see.

Once you say something you can't take it back. It is possible to delete a post at any time, however once it's been sent from your account it is in the public domain.

You create a social presence but no one is participating.

There is never a guarantee that your posts will capture the participation of others and it's important to always think about your intended audience before posting information. See our resource '**Effective ways of communicating to target demographic groups**' for more support in this area.

Finding the time to manage your accounts

Social media is all about instant engagement which is why it's important to find the appropriate amount of time to manage your accounts. Creating and maintaining a strong online presence is an on-going task and it's important someone in your team takes responsibility for checking your account/s on a daily basis.

Receiving criticism online

Whilst this might initially seem like a negative, in fact it provides you with the ideal opportunity to address feedback received in a constructive way. Where appropriate, you might be able to act on comments received, make changes and feedback any positive action you have taken, something you may not have been able to address otherwise.

Tips to help with your social media

1. Use a social media management tool

Use a social media management tool to help you monitor your social media accounts and schedule posts.

Hoot suite, Tweetdeck and Future Tweets are useful softwares which can be used across a number of social media accounts to schedule social media posts, for more information go to www.hootsuite.com

2. Use hashtags

Using the # symbol before a relevant keyword or phrase will group that post with others using the same hash tag key word. For example using #careers in a tweet would result in your tweet being grouped alongside other tweets using #careers. This makes it easier for the audience to find all the information which is relevant to careers. Hash tags are mainly used on Twitter and Facebook.

When a hash tag is being used widely, it's said to be 'trending'. Try to fit your content to hashtags that are trending to increase the number of people who see your post. For example #motivationmonday is popular every Monday – you could use this in a tweet such as

'Want a job that makes a difference? Come and start a rewarding #career with us. #motivationmonday'

You could also use quotes from people who work for you, for example

'I love seeing the difference I can make to people's lives' says John. Want a rewarding career? Come and work with us #mondaymotivation

3. Plan social media posts

To make the most out of your social media, spend some time at the start of each week to plan your forthcoming social media activity. Think about what you have coming up that week and how you would like your audience to engage with you.

Remember to include local or national awareness days and weeks in your social media posts to make them relevant; such as National Care Home Open Day, A Level Results Day or Dementia Awareness Week.

4. Use pictures, videos or animations

Pictures, videos and animations are a great way of making your social media posts stand out. Most social media posts limit the amount of text customers can see, so these are a great way of adding to your message.

You could use videos of your staff talking about their role and why they enjoy working for you. The number of people using social media on their phone or tablet is increasing so try to keep videos less than 1 minute long and add subtitles where possible.

There are lots of free sites where you can edit photos to the right size and add text, for example [Canva](https://www.canva.com/) is free to register and easy to use.

5. Post at different times in the day

Everybody is different when it comes to social media. Working patterns, lifestyles and type of job are just some of the factors which will influence when an individual will check their social media accounts, particularly in the social care sector.

Try posting at different times of the day to find out when your audience is most likely to respond to your post. On Facebook you can click on the 'insights' tab at the top of the page. If you click on 'posts' in the left column, you can see when your fans are online.

